USDA Forest Service · Pacific Southwest Region
Motorized Recreation Program

Report to California State Parks
OHV Commission
March 23, 2013
Redding, California

The topics included in this report are the result of a request by the California State Parks OHV Commission. If there are items of particular interest for future meetings that would benefit the knowledge or understand of the OHV Commission, interested parties, or the statewide program on Forest Service Lands please contact:
United States Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, Trails, Motorized Recreation & Travel Management Planning Lead – Kathleen Mick at kmick@fs.fed.us and request the items of interest be covered in the report content for future meetings.

Travel Management – Subpart C

The focus of the Travel Management topic is to provide an update and context on Subpart C of the 2005 Travel Management Rule. The following short summaries are included to provide brief context of the 3 subparts contained in the 2005 rule.

The National Forests in Region 5 continue to implement the USDA Forest Service Travel Management Rule (found in 36 CFR Part 212) that was adopted in 2005. The Rule provides unified and consistent national direction for units to define, manage, and enforce all aspects of public motor vehicle use on Forest Service lands. The regulation found at 36 CFR 212, Travel Management, has three Subparts: A (starts at 212.1), B (starts at 212.50), and C (starts at 212.80).

Subpart A ***Administration of the Forest Transportation System*** Each unit will complete a Travel Analysis Process (TAP) for system roads. The resulting identification of opportunities must bring the unit closer to defining needed versus unneeded roads, with the goal of establishing the recommended minimum road system. Since Subpart A does not result in a decision, it is not subject to NEPA regulation. No changes on the ground will occur with the TAP. In order for permanent changes, additions or closures to occur to the road system on the ground they must be the result of a NEPA decision.

Subpart B ***Designation of Roads, Trails, and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use*** Each unit prohibited cross-country travel and designated allowed public motorized use on specific system roads, trails, and areas. This designated use is defined in terms of vehicle types (Modes of Travel) and times of the year (seasonal designations). Each unit's NEPA process culminated in the production of a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). The MVUM should be reviewed annually.

Subpart C ***Use by Over-Snow Vehicles.*** Subject to the exemptions and requirements of this Subpart, the responsible official on each unit may allow, restrict, or prohibit use by over-snow vehicles on National Forest System roads and National Forest System trails and in areas on National Forest System lands.

§ 212.80
Purpose, scope, and definitions.
The purpose of this subpart is to provide for regulation of use by over-snow vehicles on National Forest System roads and National Forest System trails and in areas on

National Forest System lands. For definitions of terms used in this subpart, refer to § 212.1 in subpart A of this part.

§ 212.81
Use by over-snow vehicles.
(a) General. Use by over-snow vehicles on National Forest System roads and National Forest System trails and in areas on National Forest System lands may be allowed, restricted, or prohibited.
(b) Exemptions from restrictions and prohibitions. The following uses are exempted from restrictions and prohibitions on use by over-snow vehicles:
(1) Limited administrative use by the Forest Service;
(2) Use of any fire, military, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle for emergency purposes;
(3) Authorized use of any combat or combat support vehicle for national defense purposes;
(4) Law enforcement response to violations of law, including pursuit; and
(5) Use by over-snow vehicles that is specifically authorized under a written authorization issued under Federal law or regulations.
(c) Establishment of restrictions and prohibitions. If the responsible official proposes restrictions or prohibitions on use by over-snow vehicles under this subpart, the requirements governing designation of National Forest System roads, National Forest System trails, and areas on National Forest System lands in §§ 212.52, 212.53, 212.54, 212.55, 212.56, and 212.57 shall apply to establishment of those restrictions or prohibitions. In establishing restrictions or prohibitions on use by over-snow vehicles, the responsible official shall recognize the provisions concerning rights of access in sections 811(b) and 1110(a) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 3121(b) and 3170(a), respectively).

Currently, there are two lawsuits that pertain to Over Snow Vehicle Use. There is a national lawsuit and a California lawsuit.

1.) **National** - Winter Wildlands Alliance and other groups challenged the snowmobile exemption in the 2005 travel management rule. There is a desire by these groups to have Over Snow Vehicle use designated and indicate where on USFS lands OSV's are allowed, restricted, or prohibited.

On November 14, 2012 U.S. Magistrate Judge Ronald Bush heard oral arguments in federal court in Boise, Idaho. The court has taken the matter under advisement and indicated a written decision would be issued.

As of this report the Judge has yet to rule on the case.

2.) **California** - *Snowlands Network, Winter Wildlands Alliance and Center for Biological Diversity filed* a complaint in the Eastern District Court on November 3, 2011. The complaint alleges that the Forest Service violated NEPA by continuing to implement, approve and authorize OSV program activities (Snow trail grooming) through challenge cost share agreements with the State, without having any current NEPA analysis to assess the direct, indirect and cumulative

impacts of the OSV program. The complaint is focused on 11 national forests in Region 5. Those Forests are the Klamath NF, Modoc NF, Shasta-Trinity NF, Lassen NF, Plumas NF, Tahoe NF, Eldorado NF, Stanislaus NF, Sierra NF, Sequoia NF, Inyo NF.

The matter is still in litigation. There is no hearing date set. There is no further information available at this time.

Forest Plan Revision (FPR) – Known as Early Adopters

There are currently 3 forests in the pacific Southwest Region that are currently undergoing Forest Plan Revision. They are the Sierra NF, Sequoia NF, and Inyo NF. These forests are known as "early adopters" of the new planning rule and will be revising their plans under that rule. Each of these Forests will have information on their website regarding their individual efforts to revise their forest plans.

SCIENCE SYNTHESIS – Available for FPR

The science synthesis sprung from a Sierra Cascades Dialog in 2011 as the Dialog discussed how to use science in forest planning. The Forest Service received a request to pull together Pacific Southwest Research Station scientists to address a number of topics, which formed the basis for the research discussed at this Dialog—the Science Synthesis Report.

The Forest Service and the PSW Research Station had to make some hard choices as part of the consideration for what topics the science synthesis would cover, given limited budgets and capacity. Ultimately, they tried to identify what would provide the largest return on investment in terms of scientific knowledge and meet management needs for the three early adopter forests and the rest of the region. Now, the Forest Service is working to address gaps in the research, including the lack of research for some topics on the Eastern Sierras and the Inyo National Forest.

SCIENCE SYNTHESIS AND FOREST PLANNING

The Forest Service will use the science synthesis to inform development of assessments, the Revised Forest Plans, and the environmental impact statements. This will constitute a scientific basis as planning proceeds, with opportunity to evaluate the science synthesis and determine its appropriate role and applicability.

Everyone can contribute by participating on the Living Assessment or in other workshops and expressing views on how to best utilize the information. The Forest Service will consider other science and seek to fill in some of the gaps. Stakeholders can help identify and fill those gaps through the assessment process in meetings and workshops, but also through the Living Assessment.

The Forest Service is learning along the way with a new rule, developing new planning processes, and establishing schedules. The Forest Service does not always have all the information needed to be as precise or accurate as desired, evident in some of the posted materials for the bioregional assessment. But the Forest Service is committed to trying new approaches and working with stakeholders in new ways under articulated timeframes and taking some calculated risks necessary to improve the forest planning process.

SCIENCE SYNTHESIS PURPOSE AND ROLE IN THE FOREST ASSESSMENT

The Science Synthesis report is a well-integrated synthesis report for forest managers and stakeholders. Region 5 leadership of the Forest Service asked the Pacific Southwest Research Station (PSW) to develop a synthesis of relevant science that could inform forest plan revision. The report distills important findings from recent studies. It examines concepts and issues that cut across science disciplines to help managers address relevant challenges more holistically. It also addresses gaps in previous synthesis research by considering social and economic concerns of communities. The overarching question that the Science Synthesis Report focuses on is:

Scientific Disciplines Supporting Science Synthesis

- Forest Ecology, Fire and Fuels
- Water Resources & Aquatic Ecosystems
- Social, Economic, & Cultural Air Quality & Pollution Wildlife Species of Concern Soils
- Forest Genetics
- Post-Fire Management Integration Strategies

Based on recent scientific advances, what management strategies are likely to promote resilience of socio-ecological systems and sustain values at risk in the synthesis area over the short and long term given expected stressors?

PSW is trusted by Forest Service stakeholders who requested the synthesis. This stems from the strong support built on the success of *An Ecosystem Management Strategy for Sierra Mixed-Confer Forests (GTR 220)*, Malcolm North, et al. and subsequent work in 2012. Although regional leadership and stakeholders found that this document served as a useful format, they recommended that the content and scope of this effort expand to address additional biological, social, and economic challenges.

The approach to develop the report was collaborative and interdisciplinary. Scientists from PSW and the Pacific Northwest Research Station engaged on the report. PSW also collaborated with the Region 5 Ecology Program. The scientists participated in the Dialog in December 2011 to gather input on questions to address through the report. The PSW Research Station conducted an internal review with Region 5 planning staff and resource specialists. The report also went through an external peer review. In total, 70 people reviewed the reports (nearly 8-11 per chapter). The report draws on all four PSW program areas and other science communities representing several science disciplines. (See side bar.) The effort involved 19 scientists on the core team.

The new planning rule requires forests to consider the best available science and encourages a more active role for research in plan development. The Science Synthesis can inform management of national forest lands, specifically the ecological integrity of ecosystems, watersheds, and diverse plant and animal communities. The report also synthesizes social and economic sustainability by looking at ecosystem services and multiple use. Another connection is the emphasis on wildland fire and opportunities for fire adapted ecosystems and considering opportunities for landscape scale restoration.

The final draft report is available on the web. The next step after the Dialog will be for the science synthesis team to meet with the three early adopter forests in California to discuss the report. PSW intends to then publish the report as an official General Technical Report.

INTEGRATION

This chapter considers current management challenges and integrative approaches to promote resilience.

Opportunities for science to inform management will be critical to support forest plan revision. The scientists wrestled with the "line" between science and policy, and Dialog participants urged the scientists to make recommendations on management, stating that it proves helpful in the field when the Forest Service and stakeholders are wrestling with management decisions. The Science Synthesis has identified that research on post-wildfire impacts (beyond fire severity) can provide insight for land managers. There is also a real need to move forward large-scale adaptive management. This would include landscape-scale modeling and the effects of treating special management areas. Lastly, ecosystem services and community resilience is another area in which science can inform management. The integration chapter speaks to these linkages and more.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Science Synthesis Report
http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/reports/psw_sciencesynthesis2013/index.shtml

Summary of Each Chapter of the Science Synthesis and PDF Link

Science Synthesis to support Forest Plan Revision in the Sierra Nevada and Southern Cascades
http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/reports/psw_sciencesynthesis2013/index.shtml

Contents

1. **1.0 Introduction** [pdf]

   National Forests in the Sierra Nevada and Southern Cascades are preparing to review and revise their land and resource management plans (LMRPs). The three most southern national forests of the Sierra Nevada (Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra) were selected to be the lead forests for Region 5 and are among the first of the 155 national forests to update their plans. The new planning rule requires the forests to consider the best available science and encourages a more active role for research in plan development. To help meet this requirement, the Pacific Southwest Region (R5) Leadership asked the Pacific Southwest Research Station (PSW) to develop a synthesis of relevant science that has become available since the development of the existing LRMPs. Regional Leadership and stakeholders suggested that the GTR-220 report (North et al. 2009) served as a useful format, but that the content and scope of that report should be expanded to address additional biological, social, and economic challenges. In response to this request, a team of scientists from PSW and the Pacific Northwest Research Station (PNW) assembled to meet the goals of the effort and to engage with

forest managers and stakeholders. Team members participated in the public Sierra-Cascades Dialog sessions and met with Forest Service leadership and managers and external stakeholders to learn about their concerns, interests, and management challenges. *read the chapter*

1. **1.1 Integrative Approaches: Promoting Socioecological Resilience** [pdf]

   This chapter begins by discussing current management challenges that emerged from multiple chapters of the full report. It then it considers integrative approaches to promote resilience, including general strategies that recognize the integrated nature of socioecological systems, the importance of promoting disturbance regimes upon which these systems have evolved, and opportunities to integrate social considerations into strategies (see the Introduction chapter (1.0) for definitions of key terms). It continues by outlining an adaptive management approach to scale up current practices so that planning and implementation are more congruent with the scales at which processes affect ecosystems in the synthesis area. *read the chapter*

2. **1.2 Synopsis of Emergent Approaches** [pdf]

   This chapter focuses on three important themes that are touched on in this chapter; these themes emerged largely from synthesizing findings from the forest ecology, fire, and wildlife chapters. *read the chapter*

3. **1.3 Synopsis of Climate Change** [pdf]

   This chapter provides a synopsis of climate change, which is another issue that cut across every topic in this synthesis. *read the chapter*

4. **1.4 Research Gaps: Adaptive Management to Cross-cutting Issues** [pdf]

   This chapter discusses a number of current adaptive management efforts and important topics that emerged as priorities for adaptive management and research. Altogether, the chapters in this section outline strategies to proactively respond to expected challenges in the synthesis area. *read the chapter*

2. **2.0 Forest Ecology** [pdf]

This chapter has a different structure than the other chapters. It is focused on four subjects for which stakeholders and managers have suggested that a summary of existing information would be relevant to a regional science synthesis: tree regeneration and canopy cover, red fir forests, forest treatments to facilitate fire heterogeneity, and carbon management in fire-prone forests. Furthermore, these four sections do not attempt to summarize and cite all

literature relevant to each section. Rather, each section begins with one or two questions that motivated the subject's inclusion in this synthesis. These questions provide the framework for how the relevant literature is selected and summarized. The chapter ends with a sidebar giving an example of how larger scales are often used in meeting forest management objectives. *read the chapter*

3. **3.0 Genetics of Forest Trees** [pdf]

   Climate change is anticipated to cause dramatic shifts in climate across the Sierra Nevada, including increased frequency and severity of wildfires. Reforestation may be an important component of ecological restoration after severe wildfires. These wildfire events may be important opportunities to promote resilience to climate change, because interventions during the early stages of succession can be less costly and more effective than during later stages. Ecological genetics, the study of genes and genotypes of natural populations in their environment, can inform restoration efforts with the goal of promoting more resilient forests. *read the chapter*

4. **4.0 Fire** [pdf]

   All sections of the synthesis are concerned with fire because of its role as a dominant ecological process in the Sierra Nevada and southern Cascades. Fire has long influenced the diverse natural and cultural resources of the synthesis area, including air quality, human health, infrastructure, community well-being, soils, timber, terrestrial and aquatic wildlife, and water resources. *read the chapter*

   1. **4.1 Fire and Fuels** [pdf]

      The first chapter summarizes recent literature relevant to fire and forest management in yellow pine, mixed-conifer, and upper montane forest types in the synthesis area. It also discusses the historical role of fire in the region and describes potential outcomes of various management strategies–both currently and in the future. *read the chapter*

   2. **4.2 Fire and Tribal Cultural Resources** [pdf]

      The second chapter focuses on the pivotal role of fire in sustaining culturally important plants and opportunities to learn about the effects of Native American burning practices. *read the chapter*

   3. **4.3 Post-wildfire Management** [pdf]

      This chapter considers both short-term responses to fire, including salvage logging, and longer-term management and restoration of post-fire landscapes. That chapter was added in response to concerns from managers, as well as the expectation that climate change will increase potential for more severe wildfires (see Synopsis of Climate Change

(1.3)). As an increasing amount of forest land in the synthesis area has been affected by major wildfires, more restoration plans are being developed. The Forest Service in California recently developed a post-fire restoration strategy template to help guide national forests in planning for restoration and long-term management of burned landscapes. Together, the chapters in this section provide guidance for managing fire to minimize its undesirable outcomes while harnessing its power to rejuvenate ecosystems and increase their resilience. *read the chapter*

5. **5.0 Soils** [pdf]

   When managing for resilient forests, each soil's inherent capacity to resist and recover from changes in soil function should be evaluated relative to the anticipated extent and duration of soil disturbance. Application of several key principles will help ensure healthy, resilient soils: 1) minimize physical disturbance using guidelines tailored to specific soil types; 2) evaluate changes in nutrient capital and turnover, perhaps using simple balance sheets; and 3) recognize effects on organic matter and soil biota. Due to fire suppression, accumulations of litter and duff in many Sierra Nevada forests that evolved with frequent fires may exceed levels that occurred historically.Â Repeated prescribed burns may be designed to consume fuels in patches to temper nutrient losses and other undesired effects. Extensive areas of high-severity fire pose risks to long-term soil quality by altering soil bulk density, structure, water-holding capacity, and nutrient content in ways that ultimately contribute to declines in soil resilience. *read the chapter*

6. **6.0 Water Resources and Aquatic Ecosystems** [pdf]

   Water resources and aquatic ecosystems in the Sierra Nevada and southern Cascades support critical ecological and socioeconomic values both within and well beyond the region. This section contains four chapters on different types of water-based ecosystems in the synthesis area. Though these different kinds of systems are related through the flow of water, they have distinct ecological issues and management challenges. Taken together, these chapters feature strategies to promote resilience that complement the broader themes of the synthesis, including an emphasis on promoting or emulating natural disturbance regimes, considering the larger spatial and temporal contexts of these systems, and understanding linkages between ecological processes and social values. As water travels, it integrates landscape influences, so that downstream waterbodies and their aquatic organisms reflect the condition of terrestrial and aerial environments. Accordingly, these chapters emphasize the connections between aquatic ecosystems and other forest components that are discussed in the chapters on Forest Ecology (2.0), Fire and Fuels (4.1), Fire and Tribal Cultural Resources (4.2), Post-wildfire Management (4.3), Soils (5.0) and Air Quality (8.0). *read the chapter*

   1. **6.1 Watersheds and Stream Ecosystems** [pdf]

This chapter considers challenges and threats facing those systems, including climate change and wildfire, before turning to recent research on water quantity and water quality, including how macroinvertebrates serve as indicators of water quality. *read the chapter*

2. **6.2 Forested Riparian Areas** [pdf]

   This chapter focuses on the ecologically important transition zones between upland forests and streams. It discusses current understandings of the role of fire in riparian ecosystems, as well as findings about opportunities for management to restore those areas. *read the chapter*

3. **6.3 Wet Meadows** [pdf]

   This chapter has a special focus of restoration efforts and research in the synthesis area and in other regions. *read the chapter*

4. **6.4 Lakes: Recent Research and Restoration Strategies** [pdf]

   This chapter discusses recent research and restoration strategies for high-elevation lake ecosystems; it examines a multitude of stressors, including climate change, pollution, introduced fishes, and diseases. *read the chapter*

7. **7.0 Terrestrial Wildlife** [pdf]

   A wide range of terrestrial wildlife species inhabit the synthesis area. This section of the report focuses on three of those species: two forest carnivores, the fisher (*Martes pennanti*) and the Pacific marten (*Martes caurina*)–recently split from the American marten (*Martes americana*)–and one raptor, the California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*). Several aquatic species of concern to management, including native trouts and amphibians, are addressed in the chapters of the Water Resources and Aquatic Ecosystems section (6.1 and 6.5). *read the chapter*

   1. **7.1 The Forest Carnivores: Fisher and Marten** [pdf]

      This chapter describes the ecology and context of fisher and marten, summarizing population trends, identifying threats, and highlighting science-based implications for the management of their habitats. *read the chapter*

   2. **7.2 California Spotted Owl: Scientific Considerations for Forest Planning** [pdf]

      This chapter describes the ecological context, population trends, and habitat needs of this top predator, highlighting recent findings on the

effects of forest management, wildfire, and other important ecological stressors. *read the chapter*

8. **8.0 Air Quality** [pdf]

   The major pollutants causing ecological harm in the Sierra Nevada are ozone, which can be toxic to plants, and nitrogen deposition, which can induce undesirable effects on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Other airborne pollutants of concern include black carbon, particulate matter, pesticides, and heavy metals including mercury. Atmospheric pollutants that are delivered in wet and dry forms cause deposition of nitrogen to forests and other land areas. The highest potential for ozone to injure plants occurs on western, low-elevation slopes that have elevated daytime levels that coincide with the highest physiological activity of plants. However, recent evaluations of ozone injury in the Sierra Nevada are lacking. Ozone and nitrogen deposition interact with other environmental stressors, especially drought and climate change, to predispose forests to impacts of pests and diseases. *read the chapter*

9. **9.0 Social/Economic/Cultural Components (Preface)** [pdf]

   The approach taken in the previous chapters of this synthesis relies on multiple disciplines from the ecological sciences to frame core aspects of a sustainable, resilient ecosystem. Approaching forest management in the Sierra Nevada in a manner that promotes socioecological resilience and sustains important forest values requires consideration of not only the ecological, but also the social, economic, cultural, and institutional, components of the ecosystem, using a systems approach (Higgins and Duane 2008). The term â€œsocioecological systemâ€ has be n wid underpinning the concept of integrated socioecological systems are 1) there are interactions between biophysical and social factors, 2) there are linkages across spatial, temporal, and organizational scales, 3) the system regulates the flow and use of critical resources that are natural, socioeconomic, and cultural, and 4) the system is continuously adapting (Redman et al. 2004). In the following six chapters, we draw from published science that the authors felt was essential to informing an understanding of forest management for socioecological resilience in the Sierra Nevada synthesis area. *read the chapter*

   1. **9.1 Broader Context for Social, Economic, and Cultural Components** [pdf]

      The first chapter of this section describes the social context of the synthesis area. Drawing from the extensive analysis of the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project Final Report (1996), the chapter explores the social complexities of the area. Recreation and tourism are used as a specific example of a triple bottom line approach to sustainability, which includes ecological, economic, and social considerations; these topics were chosen in large part because they are the subject of an established body of literature and link to a global endeavor to understand and monitor

sustainable recreation and tourism (see UNEP and UNWTO 2008). *read the chapter*

2. **9.2 Ecosystem Services** [pdf]

   The second chapter focuses on ecosystem services and how managers can use that concept to frame and describe concerns and tradeoffs as they relate to social, economic, and cultural values. This chapter also considers tensions between supply and demand for such services, especially in light of the population growth described in the first chapter. *read the chapter*

3. **9.3 Sociocultural Perspectives on Threats, Risks, and Health** [pdf]

   The third chapter examines the connection between social and ecological health and well-being in the Sierra Nevada. It explores, from a sociocultural perspective, the ecosystem dynamics that are threats to and stressors on Sierra Nevada ecosystems–specifically, climate change, wildland fire, and invasive species. The chapter presents and discusses the complexities of decision making associated with effective management for resilience. *read the chapter*

4. **9.4 Strategies for Job Creation through Forest Management** [pdf]

   One way to promote community resilience is to plan forest management in a manner that creates economic opportunities in local communities. This can be accomplished in a number of ways, including forest restoration and recreation, and commodity production–the subjects of the fourth and fifth chapters. The fourth chapter discusses strategies for job creation in forest communities through forest restoration and recreation on national forest lands. *read the chapter*

5. **9.5 Managing Forest Products for Community Benefit** [pdf]

   The fifth chapter focuses on strategies for commodity production, including biomass, timber, non-timber forest products, and grazing, that support community residents who depend on these resources for their livelihoods. *read the chapter*

6. **9.6 Collaboration** [pdf]

   Community resilience in the Sierra Nevada relies on local institutions and collaborative processes that promote adaptive management and contribute to overall socioecological resilience in the region. Thus, the final chapter in the section focuses on institutions, processes, and models for collaboration in national forest management that use an all-lands approach and incorporate traditional and local ecological knowledge. The importance of collaboration in the larger context of forest management,

which is presented in the first chapter, loops back here to effective approaches for collaboration across scales, regions, and institutions throughout the state; these collaborative processes will continue to be an important influence on the success of managing for socioecological resilience in the Sierra Nevada synthesis area. *read the chapter*

10. **Appendix** [pdf]

Many of the recent topical synthesis reports cited in this report are listed below. Readers are urged to review the reference sections of each individual chapter for a more complete list. *read the chapter*

El Dorado National Forest 42 Trails
Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS)
http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/eldorado/home/?cid=STELPRDB5362046

Background:

May 26, 2011: U.S. District Court Senior Judge Lawrence Karlton found that the Forest Service failed to comply with the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) when it designated 42 existing wheeled motorized vehicle routes that cross portions of meadows with their **2008 Public Wheeled Motorized Travel Management Decision**.

The order stated that the Forest Service failed to complete a required Riparian Conservation Objective analysis for standards and guidelines in its Land and Resource Management Plan pertaining to segments that cross meadows.

February 14, 2012: The court directed the Forest Service to submit a proposed order that will set aside the decision that designates the 42 routes to the degree they go through meadows, and not affecting the sections of those same roads that do not go through meadows, unless they cannot otherwise be reached. The court also directed that the current seasonal closure for those routes remain in effect until the court order is issued.

March 14, 2012: The Forest Service submitted the proposed order.

April 23, 2012: The Eldorado National Forest issued an interim forest order keeping the 42 routes closed to motorized vehicle access until a final court order was issued later. The **court's interim decision** prohibited wheeled motor vehicle access to a total 135 miles of routes. The rest of the 1800 mile system is still open to wheeled motor vehicle travel.

April and May, 2012: Initial public notification and on-the-ground signing was completed. Public education is ongoing.

July 31, 2012: In settling a lawsuit filed in 2009 regarding the Eldorado National Forest's Travel Management decision, Judge Karlton issued his **final order** on July 31, 2012. In May 2011, Judge Karlton had upheld the majority of the Forest's 2008 Travel Management decision, although the Court did find that the Forest had erred in designating 42 roads or trails crossing meadows. This final Order identifies the remedies and corrective actions that the Forest Service is directed to follow:

- The final court order prohibits or limits travel through meadows until a new environmental decision on these specific routes is made allowing public wheeled motorized travel.
- The final court order changes the route closures from closing the entire route to just those portions of the routes that intersect with the meadows. See Table B in the final court order.
- The final court order narrowly defines what is being reviewed in the supplemental environmental analysis. These areas are being analyzed for the effect of the routes on the hydrological function of the meadow. Does this route hinder the movement of water in the meadow? Habitat, species effect, etc. is not part of the order.
- The Forest Service will revise its Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) to incorporate these changes. **(Completed.)**
- Until the MVUM is finalized and available for public distribution an interim Forest Order will be issued. **(Completed.)**
- All other portions of the 2008 Public Wheeled Motorized Travel Management Decision remain in effect. The Travel Management decision:
  - Allows highway legal and non-highway legal motor vehicle use by the public on 1,002 miles of ML-2 native surfaced roads (this total includes the addition of 17 miles of unauthorized roads to the NFTS).
  - Allows motorcycle, ATV, and high clearance vehicle use on 210 miles of trails (this total includes the addition of 6 miles of unauthorized trails to the NFTS).
  - In addition, there are 635 miles of surfaced roads suitable for passenger cars that are not a part of this decision.

August 13, 2012: The interim Forest Order and revised maps are in place.

September 21, 2012: The revised Motor Vehicle Use Map is available.

October 9, 2012: Proposed Action Released.

October 22, 2012: Open House - Alpine County - Turtlerock Community Center, Markleeville, CA

October 24, 2012: Open House - El Dorado County - Placerville, CA

October 28, 2012: Open House - Amador County - Jackson, CA

November 7, 2012: End of this phase's comment period.

February 19, 2013: Draft SEIS released

February 26, 2014: Open House - El Dorado County - Placerville, CA

March 5, 2013: Open House - Alpine County - Turtlerock Community Center, Markleeville, CA

March 6, 2013: Open House - Amador County - Jackson, CA

Additional Information

- Initial Judge's Court Order
- Questions and Answers: Court Order
- Final Judge's Court Order

42 Routes Project Update
Status:

- A supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for the affected 42 routes is in progress.
- The Draft SEIS was released for public comment on February 20. It consists of two volumes, one contains the analysis and one contains the maps.
- Please keep in mind that the draft SEIS is not the final decision, it's our best shot to date and will be available for your review and comment. Once the notice is published in the Federal Register, the public will have 45 days to comment on the alternatives and our analysis. We will then analyze those comments and complete the Final SEIS and the decision.
- The Final SEIS will be prepared after the public comment period and is expected to be completed about July 2013.
- Link to 2008 Public Wheeled Motorized Travel Management Decision.

Comment Period:

A paper copy of the DSEIS is also available for review at the Eldorado National Forest Supervisor's Office located on 100 Forni Road, Placerville, CA 95667 and at the Placerville, Pacific, and Amador Ranger District offices.

The **purpose** of this comment period is to provide an opportunity for the public to provide early and meaningful participation on a proposed action prior to a decision being made by the Responsible Official. Those who provide comments during this comment period are eligible to participate in the administrative review process.

At this time the Notice, Comment, and Appeal Procedures (36 CFR part 215) are the regulations providing guidance on the administrative review process. The Forest Service published a proposed rule for a Project-Level Predecisional Administrative Review Process in the Federal Register (Federal Register volume 77, Number 153, August 8, 2012) to replace the 36 CFR part 215 Notice, Comment and Appeal Procedures. The Forest Service will be implementing the Final Predecisional Administrative Review Procedures (36 CFR part 218) in the next few months and the Responsible Official may choose to follow that process for this project if available and timely.

How to Comment and Timeframe –

The Environmental Protection Agency published a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the DSEIS in the Federal Register, the opportunity to provide comments to establish eligibility to appeal/object under 36 CFR 215/36 CFR 218 ends 45 days following that date. **The Comment Period ends April 8, 2013.** The publication date of the NOA in the Federal Register is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for a proposed action documented in a DSEIS. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted; however, to assure eligibility to object if the administrative review process is used, comments should be written rather than oral.

It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period.

By Mail or Hand Delivery during normal business hours to:

Eldorado National Forest
Kathryn D. Hardy, Forest Supervisor
"Eldorado National Forest Travel Management Supplemental DEIS"
100 Forni Road,
Placerville, CA 95667

Office Hours: Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays.

By Fax:

(530) 621-5297 at above office hours.

By Email:
comments-pacificsouthwest-eldorado@fs.fed.us

Acceptable formats for electronic comments are plain text (.txt), rich text (.rtf), or Word (.doc).

Oral:

Oral comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office during normal business hours via telephone (530) 622-5061 or in person, or at an official agency function (public meeting) that is designed to elicit public comments. *To assure eligibility to object if the administrative review process is used, comments should be written rather than oral.*

Note: Names and addresses of those who comment will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action, and will be available for public inspection. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to a comment, a verification of identity will be required for appeal eligibility. If using an electronic message, a scanned signature is one way to provide verification. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. Only those who submit timely comments will have eligibility to appeal/object the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215/36 CFR 218. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to appeal/object must meet the information requirements of 36 CFR 215.6/36 CFR 218.5.

When using electronic mail, please send your name and physical address in addition to your email address. Thank you.

Southern California Forests Land Management Plans
(Cleveland NF, Angeles NF, San Bernardino NF, Los Padres NF)
Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS)

- The Southern California National Forests (the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests, collectively, "four forests") released the "Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS), Southern California National Forests Land Management Plan (LMP) Amendment" on February 15, 2013 for a 90 day review and comment period.
- The Draft SEIS comment period ends May 16, 2013. Depending on the scope of the comments, the Final EIS will be published in July 2013 with the Draft Records of Decision. The decision will be subject to the pre-decisional objection process established by the new planning rule.

SUMMARY

The four southern California national forests propose to amend the Land Management Plans (LMPs) as they relate to roadless area management and to monitoring. This proposed LMP amendment is a result of the Settlement Agreement approved January 3, 2011 for California Resources Agency, et al vs. United States Department of Agriculture, and Center for Biological Diversity, et al vs. United States Department of Agriculture.

The Regional Forester approved revised LMPs for the four forests in 2006. The LMPs allocated lands within Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) to various Land Use Zones

based on wilderness evaluations that were completed as part of the environmental review. The settlement agreement was accepted as the remedy for the subject lawsuit associated with the revised plans.

Scoping began with the publication of the Notice of Intent on April 27, 2012. Scoping concluded on June 11, 2012. The four forests held nine public meetings with over 250 people attending. Over 10,000 comments were received during scoping.

The proposed action identified 80,000 acres of Recommended Wilderness in four new recommended wilderness areas. The proposed action also included approximately 300,000 acres of proposed Back Country Non-Motorized areas on the Los Padres National Forest. Existing motorized roads and trails were maintained by maintaining road and trail corridors within the proposed non-motorized areas. An alternative monitoring strategy based on the current strategy was also proposed.

Scoping identified a wide range of issues related to resource management, access, commodities, recreation, wildfire, and wilderness designation. These issues led the agency to develop alternatives to the proposed action including:

- Alternative 3 – Recommended Wilderness Emphasis – this alternative allocates a larger share of the IRAs to the recommended wilderness land use zone.

- Alternative C – Extensive Monitoring – this alternative proposes more extensive monitoring, including the use of a sampling approach for baseline surveys.

The effects analysis concludes that allocating more of the study area to restrictive land use zones would benefit resources such as watershed, wildlife, and dispersed recreation by limiting future activities. The suitable area available for development of roads, developed recreation, special uses, and energy developments would decrease. No change is expected for grazing. Management for the reduction of hazardous fuels would likely shift from mechanized treatments to less intensive treatments, particularly in recommended wilderness areas. There would be no effects on fire suppression, law enforcement or other emergency response for the proposed action, and limited effects under Alternative 3 related to reduced road access.

The proposed monitoring strategy is within the agency budget and would meet the agency requirements. The extensive monitoring alternative exceeds agency requirements and current budget levels and can only be implemented if public services are reduced. Based upon the effects of the alternatives, the responsible official will decide if the plans should be amended, and if so what land use allocations and monitoring strategies will be applied.

Abstract: This supplemental statement describes three alternative land use zone allocations for 35 inventoried roadless areas, along with three alternative monitoring strategies. Proposed alternatives would apply more restrictive land use zones and increase recommended wilderness allocations. In addition, new monitoring protocols are proposed.

Reviewers should provide the Forest Service with their comments during the review period of the supplemental draft environmental impact statement. This will enable the Forest Service to analyze and respond to the comments at one time and to use information acquired in the preparation of the final environmental impact statement, thus avoiding undue delay in the decision making process. Reviewers have an obligation to structure their participation in the National Environmental Policy Act process so that it is meaningful and alerts the agency
to the reviewers' position and contentions. Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC,
435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Environmental objections that could have been raised at the draft stage may be waived if not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement. City of Angoon v. Hodel (9th Circuit, l986) and Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Comments on the draft supplemental environmental impact statement should be specific and should address the adequacy of the statement and the merits of the alternatives discussed (40 CFR 1503.3).

Send Comments to:
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Cleveland National Forest Service
10845 Rancho Bernardo Road, Suite 200
San Diego, CA 92127-2107
Web: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda- pop.php?project=35130
Email: socal_nf_lmp_amendment@fs.fed.us
Date Comments Must Be Received: May 16, 2013

Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Southern California National Forests Land Management Plan Amendment

Counties: Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties, California

Lead Agency: USDA Forest Service

Cooperating Agencies:
State of California Natural Resources Agency
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US National Marine Fisheries Service
US Environmental Protection Agency
Orange County Fire Authority Ventura County

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